

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. An apparatus for recording a custom compact disc at a retail premises, whereby the customer selects the desired music tracks on the compact disc from original compact discs stored digitally, comprising:
 - (a) a music memory containing a plurality of digitally-stored music selections;
 - (b) a plurality of preview stations distributed throughout the retail premises;
 - (c) a plurality of compact disc cutters; and
 - (d) a main computer connected to the memory, to the preview stations, and to the compact disc cutters.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the memory comprises at least one hard disc drive.
3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the music memory is located remotely from the main computer.
4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the digitally-stored music selections are uncompressed.
5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the digitally-stored music selections are compressed.
6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the digitally-stored music selections are compressed using MP3 encoding.
7. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the digitally-stored music selections are compressed using ADPCM encoding.

8. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the digitally-stored music selections are compressed using Real Audio encoding.
9. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the digitally-stored music selections are compressed using Liquid Audio encoding.
10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of preview stations further comprises a bar-code scanner, a digital display, sound reproduction means, track selection means, and compact disc purchase means.
11. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the sound reproduction means is a speaker.
12. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the sound reproduction means is a headphone.
13. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the track selection means further comprises a skip forward button and a skip back button.
14. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the compact disc purchase means comprises a buy button.
15. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of compact disc cutters further comprises storage for a number of blank compact discs, a mechanism for removing a blank compact disc from the compact disc storage, a mechanism for recording music selected from the music memory on a blank compact disc, and a printer adapted to print identifying information on the compact disc.
16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the identifying information comprises the date of manufacture, the retailer's name, and the titles of the music selections cut into the compact disc.
17. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of scannable purchase cards each having a unique bar code keyed to the music selections chosen by the customer.

18. A method of recording a custom compact disc at a retail premises having a main computer and a plurality of compact disc cutters and preview stations connected to the main computer, whereby the customer selects the desired music tracks on the compact disc from original compact discs stored digitally in a music memory by scanning a barcode on the compact disk packaging at a preview station, comprising the steps of:

- (a) the customer obtaining a purchase card with a unique barcode number and an authorized amount from retail premises personnel;
- (b) the customer scanning a disc barcode for a compact disc to be sampled at a preview station;
- (c) playing each track corresponding to the disc barcode at the preview station;
- (d) the customer selecting each track to be purchased, up to the authorized amount, by pressing a buy button at the preview station;
- (e) scanning the purchase card to obtain the unique barcode;
- (f) keying each selected track to the unique barcode;
- (g) scanning the purchase card at a checkout station to obtain the unique barcode; and
- (h) recording the selected tracks keyed to the unique barcode on a compact disc cutter.

(a) the customer obtaining a purchase card with a unique barcode number and an authorized amount from retail premises personnel;

(c) the preview station transmitting the disc barcode to a main computer;

(e) the main computer transmitting the digitally-stored track to the preview station;

(g) the customer selecting the track by pressing a buy button if he wishes to purchase the track;

(i) recording and displaying the length of the selected track;

(j) notifying the customer if the total length of all selected tracks exceeds the authorized amount on the purchase card;

- (k) keying the selected track to the unique barcode;
- (l) scanning the purchase card at a preview station located in the retail premises check-out area;
- (m) transmitting the unique barcode to the main computer;
- (n) the main computer retrieving each selected track from the music memory;
- (o) the main computer transmitting each selected track to a compact disc cutter;
- (p) the compact disc cutter recording each selected track on a blank compact disc, producing a recorded compact disc; and
- (q) the customer exchanging the purchase card for the recorded compact disc.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the customer purchases the purchase card before selecting tracks to be purchased.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein the customer purchases the purchase card after selecting tracks to be purchased.

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